

Just Let it Slip

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Summary:

Eddie is having trouble sleeping and turns to Richie for consolation.

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There's a tightness coiling around his lungs; a familiar suffocation brought on by pure anxiety.

Its dark, silent, cold. The only object in sight is a white refrigerator standing in great contrast in the dark void.

It shakes.

He knows what's inside and suddenly he can't breathe. He reaches for his inhaler but it's not in his pocket. There is no pocket. There's no pants, or shirt, or underwear. He is totally exposed. There's nothing to hide behind.

The refrigerator shakes again and metallic bangs echo through the nullity.

It jolts out, the door of the fridge swinging open so violently it breaks. It lets out a blood curdling scream as it snaps its jaw open. There's rows and rows of teeth that are sharpened to a point. It hits the floor and starts a terrifying crawl. It's hunched over, bones snapping, locking into place.

He can't breathe. His throat is open but his lungs just refuse to let in air. He's starting to fully fear he just might suffocate when suddenly his airways open and he takes in gasps of air.

Eddie jolts upward in his bed, the remnants of the nightmare still clinging to the insides of his mind. His heart is pounding as his limbs flex in shock. His breathing tries to catch up to his heart.

There's a ghastly feeling of being watched. It's too unsettling. He decides he needs to get out- to go out- so he grabs his jacket and sneaks out the back door.

He's wandering the dark streets of the neighborhood and, surprisingly isn't frightened at all. The only thing that frightens him now is the thought of that disgusting demon of a clown returning. That and refrigerators.

Before Eddie can even notice where he's going he's at a familiar house here on the block. He decides to walk up to the window on the side.

He knocks gently. "Richie?"

He waits a few seconds but there's no response.

He knocks again, louder this time, and tries again. "R-Richie?"

There's still no response.

He starts to just knock nonstop, gradually getting louder and louder before the window finally flies open. "What the fuck do you want?!" Richie shouts at him as quietly as possible.

"I- I had a dream..."

"Yeah, so?"

"About... it."

Richie's face softens knowingly. He steps back from the window and gestures inward. Eddie happily accepts and hops through.

"You want to... talk about it? Or something?"

Eddie shakes his head.

Richie shifts awkwardly for a moment, "do you... like, want a snack or something?"

This pulls a chuckle from Eddie, "sure."

The two make their way to the kitchen and start to rummage through the pantry pulling out chips and crackers.

Richie walks away for a moment, "hey, do you want anything to drink?"

Eddie turns around towards him to answer but... The fridge.

Richie goes to open it and Eddie panics, "no! Don't open it!"

There's a sudden pressure restricting his breathing, but this isn't his asthma. This is different. He doesn't know what this is. He suddenly starts to sweat. His hands go numb and his heart begins to race. The world around him gets fuzzy and suddenly everything is as if it isn't.

Richie is there when he collapses, catching him just in time. He begs for him to say what's wrong but all Eddie can muster up is "in the fridge".

It doesn't take but another two seconds for Eddie to suddenly break down into a mess of hiccups and sobs. His brain is being shredded from the inside. Emotional pain flows out of his every pore.

Richie doesn't know how to react at first, simply patting him on the shoulder before retreating awkwardly, but once he sees just how shook up he is he pulls him into a hug. Eddie latches on like his life depends on it, shoving his face into Richie's shoulder. Richie simply sits still, rubbing circles into his friend's back.

It takes a while for Eddie to finally compose himself enough to even out his breathing. When he does the first words out of his mouth are "I'm sorry."

"Dude, it's okay. I promise."

Eddie pulls away and wipes the last of his tears away with the back of his hand.

"That dream really screwed with you, huh?"

Eddie nods as he sucks in an unattractive sniffle.

Richie is hesitant for a moment, until he finally just opens his mouth, "can I just say something?"

Eddie snorts again before answering, "yeah, why wouldn't you?"

He has a good point. Richie has never found a reason to shut up before. So he just lets it out, "It's really fucked with me, too. Not with nightmares but with, like, random flashbacks. I'll just see something and it makes me think and... I just can't stop thinking. You know?"

"Yeah. I know."

Richie continues to ramble as the two of them begin migrated towards the couch. Eddie nods occasionally to reassure him that he is still listening.

The two flop down on the couch and Eddie curls up.

"- and I'm just... yeah..."

Eddie nods again, but doesn't answer. He doesn't know how to. He honestly doesn't want to. He just wants to sit and know that someone is here with him- for him.

Eddie stuffs his head in the soft space between Richie's neck and arm, but this time Richie doesn't flinch at all. Instead his arm finds its way around Eddie's shoulders, pulling him closer.

The two sit in silence and stare at the wall. Neither seem to have a problem with it. In fact, it's quite relaxing. For what felt like the first time in a while there was true silence inside and out.